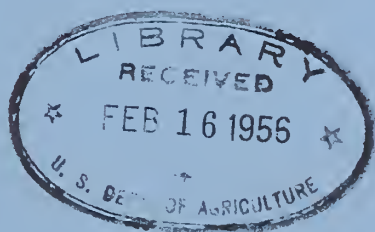


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

A249.3
C73

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMODITY STABILIZATION SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LIBRARY



BOOK NUMBER

A249.3
C73

006702

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK
CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I - PURPOSE	1
II - GENERAL	1
III - OBJECTIVES	1
IV - POLICY	2
A - General	2
B - Responsibility of Management	2
C - Recognition of Supervisory Participation	2
D - Awards Standards	2
E - Maximum Utilization of Contributions	2
F - Consideration for Promotion	3
V - COVERAGE	3
VI - DEFINITIONS	3
A - Employee Contribution	3
B - Incentive Award	3
C - Honorary Award	3
D - Inter-Departmental Award	3
E - Presidential Award	3
F - Length-of-Service Award	3
VII - ADMINISTRATION	3
A - General Responsibilities	3
B - Delegation of Authority	4
1. Deputy Administrator, Operations	4
2. CSS Incentive Awards Committee	4
3. Division and Office Directors, and ASC State Administrative Officers	4
4. Division and Office Incentive Awards Committees ..	4
C - CSS Incentive Awards Committee	5
1. Composition	5
2. Responsibility	5
D - Division and Office Incentive Awards Committees	6
1. Composition	6
2. Responsibility	6
E - Role of the Supervisor	7
F - Publicity	7
G - Request for Reconsideration	7
H - Review of Division and Office Awards Programs	7
I - Handling Disapproval Actions	9
J - Other Employee Recognition	9
K - Presentation of Awards	9
VIII - EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS	9
A - Types of Contributions	9
1. "Idea" or "Invention"	9
2. Sustained Superior Work Performance	9
3. Special Acts or Service	10
B - Examples of Types of "Ideas" and "Performance" which Warrant Consideration	10
C - Initiation of Contributions	11
D - Methods of Discovery	11

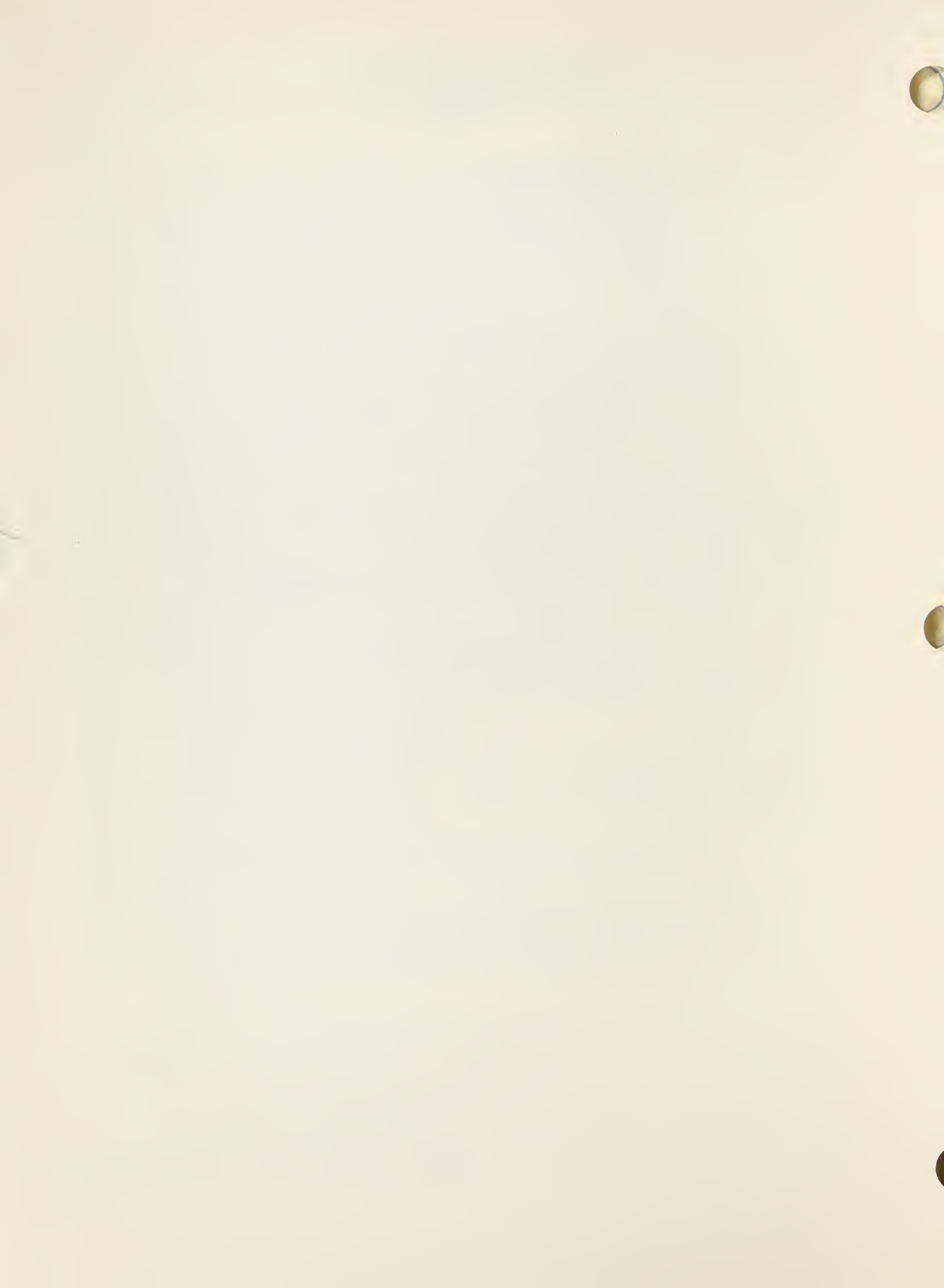
INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK
CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
E - Consideration of Contributions	12
IX - CASH AWARDS	12
A - Types of Cash Awards	12
B - Eligibility	12
C - Specific Documentation Required	13
D - Limitations	14
E - Group Awards	14
F - Award Scale for Tangible Benefits	14
1. Deviations from the Table	15
2. Determination and Documentation of Savings	15
G - Award Scale for Intangible Benefits	16
1. Award Scale for Sustained Superior Work Performance	17
H - Combined Monetary Savings and Intangible Benefits	18
I - Duplicate Awards	18
J - Award Claim Waiver	18
K - Partial Awards	18
L - Supplemental Awards	18
M - Awards to Former Employees and Estates of Deceased Employees	19
N - Payment of Awards	19
1. General	19
2. Obligations	19
3. Processing Payments	19
X - EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS	20
A - General	20
1. Definition	20
2. Originality	20
3. Limitation Periods	21
4. Adoption	21
5. Modification of Suggestion	21
6. Duplicate Suggestions	21
B - Processing of Suggestions	22
1. Submission	22
2. Action on Suggestions	22
C - Investigation of Suggestions	23
D - Rejection Notices for Non-Adoptable Suggestions	23
XI - PERFORMANCE CONTRIBUTIONS	24
A - General	24
B - Submission of Award Recommendations	24
C - Outstanding Performance Ratings	24
D - Limitations	24
E - Documentation	25
F - Evaluation of Performance	25
G - Consideration for Honorary Awards	27
XII - DEPARTMENT HONORARY AWARDS	27
A - Types of Department Honorary Awards	27
1. Distinguished Service Award	27
2. Superior Service Award	27
3. Length-of-Service Award	28

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
B - Eligibility Standards	28
1. General Qualifications	28
2. Distinguished Service Award	28
3. Superior Service Award	29
4. Length-of-Service Award	29
C - Nominations for Award	30
1. General	30
2. Consideration for Nomination	30
3. Submission of Nominations	30
D - CSS Committee Authority	32
E - Departmental Action	32
1. Distinguished Service Awards Committee	32
2. Superior Service Awards Committee	32
3. Length-of-Service Determination	32
4. Review by Director of Personnel	32
5. Presentation	32
XIII - INTER-DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS	33
A - General Information	33
B - Suggestions originating in Department of Agriculture	33
C - Suggestions originating Outside the Department of Agriculture	33
D - Determination of Award	34
E - Action on Civil Service Commission Recommendation	34
F - Payment of Inter-departmental Awards	34
G - Awards by Employing Department	34
XIV - PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS	34
A - General	34
B - Nomination	34
C - Payment of Awards	35
XV - OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE RATINGS	35
XVI - RECORDS AND REPORTS	36
A - Records	36
1. Contribution Case Folder	36
2. Other Records	37
B - Reports	37
1. Official Personnel Folder	37
2. Annual Report of the Incentive Awards Program	37
XVII - AWARDS FOR SUGGESTION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE	37



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Commodity Stabilization Service
Washington 25, D. C.

ACTION BY: All Divisions and Offices
All State and Insular ASC Offices

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

Approved

Earl M. Hughes
Administrator

I PURPOSE

This handbook provides procedures for the administration of the Incentive Awards Program and is issued in accordance with Instruction 122-1 and under the authority of Title III, Government Employees Incentive Awards Act (68 Stat. 1112); Part 32, Civil Service Regulations, and the Department of Agriculture Incentive Awards Plan.

II GENERAL

The Government Employees' Incentive Awards Act (Title III of Public Law 763, 83rd Congress), approved September 1, 1954, in a firm expression of the intent of the President and the Congress that there be established a Government-wide Incentive Awards Program which will effectively encourage all officers and employees of the Federal Government to participate in the common task of improving the efficiency and economy of Government operations. Such wide participation is to be obtained through recognition that employees at all levels share in the responsibility for efficient and economical operations. The Incentive Awards Program, clearly endorsed and vigorously supported at all levels of management on a continuing basis, will contribute significantly to improved Government operations.

III OBJECTIVES

The emphasis of the entire Incentive Awards Program is toward increased production and improved operations as an integral part of supervision and management. The following specific objectives are established:

A Improve Government operations by providing greater incentive for increased participation in the solution of management problems by personnel at all levels.

B Recognize and reward employees, individually or in groups, for their suggestions, inventions, superior accomplishments or other personal efforts which contribute to efficiency, economy, or other improvement in Government operations.

C Recognize and reward employees individually or in groups who perform special acts or services in the public interest in connection with, or related to, their official employment.

D Make maximum use of available manpower, money and materials through utilization of employee suggestions and achievements.

Initiated by
Office of
Administrator

Distribution
A, AD Washington only;
S3

Page 1
6-20-55

IV POLICY

A General - It is our policy to conduct our operations in the most efficient manner possible and to make a maximum contribution to the effective operation of our agency, the Department of Agriculture and the Federal Government. Consistent with this policy it is incumbent upon management to avail itself of the use of every device provided to attain these ends. As a part of this policy the Incentive Awards Program has been established to encourage the fullest participation of employees in improving Government operations and to recognize and reward employees at all levels, individually or in groups for contributions to efficiency, economy or other improvement of Government operations that are above those normally expected or for special acts or services in the public interest performed in connection with or related to their official employment. There are two kinds of awards--cash and honorary. Cash awards up to \$25,000 may be granted for contributions resulting in monetary savings or intangible benefits to the government. Honorary awards may be granted independent of or in addition to cash awards. They are not intended as a substitute for cash awards. Honorary awards may be in the form of letters of commendation, certificates, and USDA Superior or Distinguished Service Awards. There are three kinds of employee contributions eligible for award: (1) suggestions, (2) superior performance of assigned duties, and (3) special acts or services in the public interest.

B Responsibility of Management - The heads of all divisions and offices shall have the responsibility for administering and utilizing the program in order that the agency and the employees may derive the greatest possible benefits therefrom.

C Recognition of Supervisory Participation - Supervisors will be given due recognition for the extent to which they are successful in motivating the interests and participation of employees in the Incentive Awards Program. Supervisors who have demonstrated an unusual ability to stimulate employee participation shall be given special recognition by means of letters of commendation, recognition during award ceremonies and other appropriate means. Supervisors outstanding in successful participation of their employees may be given consideration for recognition by cash awards.

D Awards Standards - Awards may be granted to individuals or groups for contributions which are either outside the employee's job responsibilities or within the employee's job responsibilities but sufficiently meritorious or superior to warrant special recognition. Contributions which warrant recognition may result from the suggestion of a constructive idea, including those that are patentable, sustained work performance which is over and above the normal position requirements of the individual or the group, or from other meritorious personal efforts or special acts or services in connection with or related to official employment which contributes either to the efficiency, economy, or other improvement of Government operation, or are otherwise in the public interest.

E Maximum Utilization of Contributions - In order that the maximum benefits may be received from constructive ideas and other contributions, it shall be the policy to give the maximum feasible distribution to and to make maximum use of such contributions within CSS, ASC, the Department and the Federal Government.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(IV)

F Consideration for Promotion - Appropriate notation will be made in the employee's official personnel folder of all cash and honorary awards or other recognition granted him. This information shall be given appropriate consideration along with all other pertinent data in making a selection for promotion.

V COVERAGE

All Federal officers and employees are eligible to participate in the Incentive Awards Program.

VI DEFINITIONS

A Employee Contribution - The term "employee contribution" means a suggestion, invention, superior accomplishment, or other personal effort which contributes to the efficiency, economy or other improvement of Government operations; or the performance by an employee of a special act or service in the public interest in connection with or related to his official employment. To be considered for an incentive award an employee contribution must be described in writing.

B Incentive Award - The term "incentive award" means either a cash award, an honorary award, or both.

C Honorary Award - The term "honorary award" means an incentive award presented by the Secretary of Agriculture in the form of a plaque, or medal, certificate and emblem in honorary recognition of service which is determined to be exceptionally meritorious or outstanding.

D Inter-Departmental Award - The term "inter-departmental award" means an incentive award granted by the head of one department for an approved employee contribution from an employee or employees of another department.

E Presidential Award - The term "Presidential award" means an award granted by the President of the United States in recognition of an unusually outstanding employee contribution.

F Length-of-Service Award - The term "length-of-service" award means an award in the form of a certificate and a button or pin given for 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50 years of service with the Department.

VII ADMINISTRATION

A General Responsibilities - Directors of divisions and offices and ASC State Administrative Officers are responsible for administering the program.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(VII)

B Delegation of Authority - This plan provides for central administrative direction and review and delegates the following authority and responsibility.

1 Deputy Administrator, Operations

a Over-all administrative responsibility for the direction, operation and policy guidance of the Incentive Awards Program in the agency.

b Review and act upon recommendations of the CSS Incentive Awards Committee for referral to the Department. However, if the Deputy Administrator, Operations, is not in accord with such a recommendation, he shall discuss the matter with the Committee. If after such meeting with the Committee, no agreement is reached, the matter shall be presented to the Administrator for final decision.

2 CSS Incentive Awards Committee

a Responsibility for administering the program in the agency under the direction of the Deputy Administrator, Operations.

b Authorized to approve cash awards up to and including \$300.

c Recommend to the Deputy Administrator, Operations, for referral to the Department, awards in excess of \$300, and other action which requires Departmental approval.

3 Division and Office Directors, and ASC State Administrative Officers

a Over-all administrative responsibility for the direction, operation and policy guidance of the Incentive Awards Program in the Division or Office.

b Review recommendations of the Division or Office Incentive Awards Committee to the CSS Committee and to forward such recommendations with a transmittal memo giving their concurrence or objection to the recommendation and stating the reasons for such opinion.

4 Division and Office Incentive Awards Committees

a Responsibility for administering the program in the Division or Office under the direction of the Director of the Division or Office or the ASC State Administrative Officer as the case may be.

b Authority to approve cash awards up to and including \$100 for employee suggestions.

 INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(VII B 4)

c Recommend to the CSS Incentive Awards Committee through the Division or Office Director or ASC State Administrative Officer cash awards for employee suggestions in excess of \$100, cash awards for performance and other action requiring approval by the CSS Committee.

C CSS Incentive Awards Committee

1 Composition - The CSS Incentive Awards Committee consisting of at least eight members including the Chairman and the Executive Secretary, shall be appointed annually each fiscal year by the Administrator. The Chairman of the CSS Employee Council shall be automatically a member of the Committee.

2 Responsibility

- a Review and act upon incentive award recommendations.
- b Implement the Incentive Awards Program for the agency.
- c Recommend policy and procedures.
- d Administer these instructions.
- e Review and act upon incentive award recommendations which are outside the authority of Division and Office committees.
- f Exercise final jurisdiction to settle disputes, appeals and complaints arising in connection with the program.
- g Review reports of cash awards granted under delegated authority.
- h It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Secretary to:

- (1) Actively direct and administer the program agency wide and to provide necessary staff services for the Committee.
- (2) Provide advice and assistance to subordinate committees and officials concerning administration of the program.
- (3) Consolidate, review and evaluate reports from subordinate levels, prepare required reports, and maintain necessary records concerning activities of the Committee and the program in general.
- (4) Maintain liaison with the Department, other Government departments and others on all matters pertaining to the program.

(VII C 2 h)

(5) Publicize awards and disseminate information about adopted suggestions that may be of general interest.

(6) Execute the Committee's orders and decisions.

D Division and Office Incentive Awards Committees

1 Composition

a An Incentive Awards Committee consisting of at least three members shall be established in each division and office. Each such committee shall be appointed by the division or office director or the ASC State Committee Chairman.

b The Chairman shall be a person within the division or office who is vitally concerned with management improvement and better employee relationships.

2 Responsibility

a To use the Incentive Awards Program as an integral part of management in the task of improving their operations and service.

b Be responsible for the supervision, management, promotion, and guidance of the program within their organizational jurisdiction.

c Represent the division or office in the approval, rejection or recommendation of awards or proposals, and in the preparation and submission of required materials and reports.

d Maintain liaison with the CSS Committee in the conduct of all activities under the program.

e Be responsible for the review and evaluation of all employee suggestions and recommendations with final authority to approve cash awards not in excess of \$100 for employee suggestions.

f Forward for approval to the CSS Committee all cases meriting favorable consideration above the division or office committee level. The Committee must assure the completeness of such submissions and include all necessary supporting data. All submissions to the CSS Committee must bear the official recommendation of the division or office committee.

g Return promptly all disapproved recommendations, indicating in each case the reasons for disapproval.

h Maintain necessary records concerning activities of the committee and the program.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(VII)

E Role of the Supervisor - Supervisors should actively assist in the promotion and operation of the Incentive Awards Program. Specifically, supervisors are expected to fully understand the purpose and operation of the program, actively encourage employees to submit ideas for improvement, assist employees with the development and testing of ideas, identify and recommend awards for employees who perform duties or make contributions which meet the standards for formal recognition, promptly evaluate all ideas and award recommendations received from employees, other supervisors, or the Incentive Awards Committee. Management should give due recognition to supervisors who are unusually successful in motivating their employees to submit beneficial ideas and improve work performance.

F Publicity - In order for the awards program to operate successfully and possess substantial incentive value, it must be made known to employees generally. In particular, supervisors should be well informed of the plan and of the established standards, so that they will be alert to report instances of outstanding service. Awards will be reported in Department publications and the CSS Work Improvement News. An Incentive Awards Newsletter will be distributed to Awards Committees for their information. Posters for display and other material for distribution to employees and supervisors will be issued from time to time. In addition, Divisions and Offices should publicize awards to their own employees, issue memoranda, and other material to promote the program, indicate management support and provide general information. Divisions and Offices should send to the CSS Committee copies of publicity material which they develop and use. The CSS Committee will make such material available to other Divisions and Offices for their consideration and possible use.

G Request for Reconsideration - Request for reconsideration of the decision of an awards committee may be made by the person or persons initiating the suggestion or recommendation, by a subordinate awards committee or the Head of the Division or Office concerned. A written statement setting forth the reasons for requesting reconsideration should be submitted. The request may be submitted through regular channels, direct to the Division or Office Awards Committee or direct to the CSS Committee. If the information submitted warrants such action, the case may be reopened and a different decision rendered. Any Awards Committee may reopen a case for reconsideration on its own motion at any time prior to the payment of an award.

H Review of Division and Office Awards Programs - Division and office awards programs will be inspected from time to time by the Civil Service Commission, the Department Office of Personnel, the CSS Personnel Management Division, and the CSS Audit Division to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, observe compliance, and assist in the development of effective programs. Some of the important factors in the effective administration of the program are:

(VII H)

- 1 A plan, suited to the organization and its employees, which provides for the use of incentive awards as an integral part of supervision and management.
- 2 Impartial committees to screen, and evaluate promptly achievements or activities for possible incentive awards.
- 3 Criteria outlining the general conditions under which meritorious achievements or activities might qualify for the awards offered.
- 4 Making available to employees basic information or guidelines that will be useful for them in analyzing their own activity for possible improvement.
- 5 The assignment of continuing responsibility to supervisors to present to the awards committees the names of employees whose performance or ideas merit consideration for an award.
- 6 Making available for general management use the improvements and ideas resulting from these programs.
- 7 Active interest and support by all levels of management in securing and sustaining a high degree of employee participation.
- 8 Recognition of supervisors who are successful in developing a working environment in which employees are encouraged to participate in improving Government operations.
- 9 Prompt and impartial evaluation of employee contributions, prompt notification to employees of decisions made, and prompt recognition of employees whose contributions have been approved.
- 10 Proper and uniform application of award scales and other award criteria.
- 11 Adequate documentation in support of action taken on employee contributions.
- 12 The giving of due weight to awards granted in qualifying and selecting employees for promotion.
- 13 Consideration of employee contributions for applicability throughout the Division or Office, the agency, the Department and the Government in order to make available for general management use improvements resulting from the program.
- 14 Effective and continuing publicity which emphasizes to supervisors and employees the importance of the program in improving Government

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(VII H 14)

operations and the desirability of their active participation, and which keeps employees informed at all times with respect to awards available and fellow employees whose efforts have been recognized.

I Handling Disapproval Actions - From the standpoint of maintaining employee interest and participation in the Incentive Awards Program, the handling of disapprovals is the most significant task of supervisors, evaluating officials and Awards Committees. Good judgment, diplomacy, tact, and careful consideration of the originator's viewpoint are vital factors in the majority of cases considered in the Incentive Awards Program. Supervisors, evaluating officials, and Awards Committees must share the responsibility for explaining and handling disapproval decisions so that the contributor will feel that his proposal has been given thorough and impartial consideration. Personal discussion of the decision or letters used to advise of disapproval should include clear explanation of the evaluation and the reasons for the adverse action.

J Other Employee Recognition - While cash awards are important in the Incentive Awards Program, they do not constitute the only means of employee recognition. Employee recognition includes other forms of recognition such as promotional opportunities, letters of commendation to be inserted in personnel folders, honorary awards, and other expressions of appreciation.

K Presentation of Awards - Divisions and Offices will present, with appropriate ceremonies, awards granted to their employees. When feasible and photographs of the presentation are taken, a copy of the photograph should be sent to the CSS Committee for publication purposes. In certain cases awards may be presented by other officials. Distinguished and Superior Service Awards are generally presented by the Secretary. The Director of Personnel presents cash awards for suggestions adopted on a Department-wide basis or in other departments, and the Administrator presents cash awards and certificates involving significant contributions.

VIII EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONSA Types of Contributions

1 "Idea" or "invention" type in which the employee suggests improvements in governmental operations.

2 Sustained Superior Work Performance - Performance, for a period of not less than six months, of assigned duties in one or more aspects of the position which is sufficiently over and above normal job expectancy to merit special recognition. Such performance may, but need not necessarily include any specific and identifiable contribution other than the high caliber of service rendered.

(VIII A)

3 Special Acts or Service - Performance involving a specific and identifiable achievement or accomplishment of an especially meritorious nature which makes a significant, important and valuable contribution.

B Examples of Types of "Ideas" and "Performance" which Warrant Consideration

1 Ideas which result in improved operations. The fact that the idea is not new or original does not necessarily make the idea ineligible for award consideration.

2 The suggestion or development of an invention. Whether or not it is eligible for a patent is immaterial.

3 Exemplary performance of assigned tasks whereby previously unattained records of production are achieved.

4 Sustained above average performance for at least six months that merits special recognition.

5 Outstanding performance rating.

6 Performance which has involved the overcoming of unusual difficulties.

7 Exemplary or courageous handling of an emergency situation in connection with or related to official employment.

8 Creative efforts that make important contributions to science, research, or public administration.

9 Improving service to the public in specific or measurable ways.

10 Devising new and improved work methods and procedures that result in substantial savings in manpower, time, space, materials, or other items of expense, or improving the safety or health of employees, or other benefits.

11 Achievement or performance by an individual or group which results in outstanding economy and efficiency.

12 Getting jobs done despite handicaps.

13 Unusual assistance to supervisors.

14 Exceptional success in training and developing employees resulting in significant benefit.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(VIII B)

- 15 Outstanding contributions to better management.
- 16 Unique record for quantity and quality of work.
- 17 Substantial contribution to employee morale which has significant effect on effectiveness and efficiency.
- 18 Successful handling of heavy workload and emergency situations over an extended period of time.
- 19 Outstanding contribution to effective public relations.
- 20 Acts of heroism while on duty, at risk of life or personal safety, in time of emergency, such as accident, fire, flood, storm, or robbery.
- 21 Exemplary performance of assigned tasks, setting a previously unattained record of achievement and inspiring others to improve the quantity and quality of their work.
- 22 Significant contributions to agriculture and rural life.
- 23 Acts, special service or performance which establishes recognition as an authority in a field of work.
- 24 Performance by employees which singles them out as the outstanding or among the most outstanding in their particular kind of position.
- 25 Outstanding or meritorious authorship.

C Initiation of Contributions - Descriptions of contributions may be initiated by, or in behalf of, individual employees or groups of employees. Contributions of employees of other agencies may also be considered. Special emphasis should be given to one of the intents of the Incentive Awards Act which is to encourage group effort in securing increased improvement of operations.

D Methods of Discovery - Officials who work with, inspect, audit, or review the work of persons or units in other offices should be alert to report to the appropriate Division or Office any instances of outstanding service which they may observe. In addition, Heads of Divisions and Offices shall develop any other suitable methods within their jurisdictional areas for discovering all instances of outstanding service. Examples of methods from which recommendations for award may originate are:

(VIII D)

- 1 As the result of reviews and appraisals conducted.
- 2 From statements of supervisors whenever an individual or group performance is definitely above average and deserving of special recognition.
- 3 As a result of suggestions submitted.
- 4 From field inspection trips, surveys, etc.
- 5 From budget review.
- 6 From fellow employees or others identifying accomplishments.

E Consideration of Contributions - When necessary, the CSS Committee may refer nominations and recommendations to appropriate Divisions and Offices for their review and comment. In such case if the Division or Office does not concur in the nomination or recommendation, the correspondence or facts relating to the non-concurrence shall be referred to the originating Division or Office which shall have the privilege of submitting additional information in writing to the CSS Committee.

IX CASH AWARDS

A Types of Cash Awards - There shall be three types of cash awards as follows:

- 1 Suggestion or invention awards.
- 2 Sustained superior work performance awards.
- 3 Special act or service awards.

B Eligibility

1 An employee contribution to be eligible for a cash award may be either

- a Outside the employee's job responsibilities, or
- b Within the employee's job responsibilities, but sufficiently superior or meritorious as to warrant special recognition.

2 The problem of determining eligibility of a contribution for an award is a difficult one. Committees must determine whether or not a contribution is within or outside an employee's job responsibilities, and if

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(IX B 2)

within, whether it is sufficiently superior or meritorious to warrant special recognition. Position descriptions are not the sole criteria for such determination. At times it is also necessary to consider performance requirements, supervisor's interpretations, authority necessary to place the contribution into effect, and other factors, such as customary practices, which may have a bearing on the duties expected of the employee. The distinction between what is "normally expected" and what is "hoped for" in the way of an employee's performance should be borne in mind. When the employee contribution is judged to be within the job responsibilities, the following should be considered in determining whether the contribution is sufficiently superior or meritorious to warrant an award.

a Requirements of the job - The employee's job description, assigned duties, and the normal performance requirements of his position should be reviewed to determine the degree to which the employee's contribution exceeds the normal requirements of the work for which he is being paid. An affirmative answer to such questions as the following would ordinarily preclude consideration for an award:

(1) Is the employee expected or required to make contributions of the type under consideration? However, if there is anything special or unique about the particular contribution, the employee may be considered for an award.

(2) Is the nature of the contribution such that the employee's performance would be judged less than satisfactory if he had not made this contribution?

(3) Is the contribution one pertaining to the immediate work area which the employee can place into operation without consulting higher authority and which affects only his work?

b Use of the Contribution Elsewhere - If it is determined that a contribution is within the job responsibilities, the extent of application as well as the quality of the contribution should be considered. If the contribution is adopted for other similar positions or work areas, this may make it eligible for award consideration.

C Specific Documentation Required - Recommendations for all awards must be documented with data specifically indicating how the employee has met the standards prescribed for the award recommended. General endorsement of an award recommendation by an employee's superiors regardless of their level does not in itself constitute an adequate basis for granting an award. Factual documentation in each case must be given to clearly justify the granting of an incentive award. Superlatives, endorsements, opinions and conclusions must be supported by facts so as to meet the inspection requirements of the Department and the Civil Service Commission.

(IX)

D Limitations - The minimum award for any adopted suggestion is \$10. The maximum award payable by a division or office committee for a single suggestion is \$100. Recommendations for awards in excess of \$100 for suggestions, and for awards in any amount for contributions other than suggestions will be documented and forwarded to the CSS Incentive Awards Committee for further consideration. The maximum award payable by the CSS Committee is \$300. Contributions which justify an award in excess of \$300 will be recommended to the Deputy Administrator, Operations, for referral to the Department. The Department may approve awards up to \$5,000. Contributions justifying awards in excess of \$5,000 will be recommended by the Department to the Civil Service Commission which may approve cash awards up to \$25,000.

E Group Awards - Where a contribution has been made by more than one employee or by a group of employees, all employees contributing, including supervisors, may join in the awards. Such awards will be distributed as follows:

1 If the employees have contributed on a substantially equal basis to the employee contribution being recognized, each employee will receive an equal share of the total award.

2 If the degree of contribution from employees in the group differs materially, each employee will receive a share of the total group award that is in proportion to his particular contribution.

The total of a group cash award should generally not exceed the amount authorized for that type of award if made to one individual. Where individual shares of such group award appear inappropriate, exceptions may be made as provided in Paragraph IX F 1 below.

F Award Scale for Tangible Benefits - When an employee or group of employees is eligible for a cash award based on tangible savings, the amount to be paid shall normally be based on, but not necessarily limited to, the estimated monetary savings resulting from the contribution's first full year of operation. The amount of the award shall be determined in accordance with the following table unless for special reasons, as provided in paragraph IX F 1 below, it is determined that a different amount is justified. In such case the reasons must be fully documented in support of the action taken.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(IX G)

Commodity Stabilization Service
Intangible Awards Table

Value of Benefit	Amount of Award Based on Extent of Application			
	Branch	Division	Agency Wide	Dept. Wide
<u>LIMITED</u> (Limited potential value, minor change in procedures, simple modification of methods. Of limited benefit to the persons, offices or operations affected.)	\$10-50	\$25-75	\$50-100	\$75-200
<u>MODERATE</u> (Involving an important improvement affecting minor programs, or involving important changes in methods or procedures. Of moderate benefit to the persons, offices or operations affected.)	100-200	150-300	300-500	500-725
<u>HIGH</u> (Involving major improvement, usually affecting major programs, or involving major changes in methods or procedures. Large and significant potential value contributing to successful achievement of important program objectives.)	300-500	500-725	725-1000	1000-2000
<u>OUTSTANDING</u> (Involving outstanding improvements. Materially affecting major programs. Contributing to successful achievement of major objectives or advancement of major programs.)	725-1000	1000-2000	2000-3000	3000-5000

1 Award Scale for Sustained Superior Work Performance - When no tangible savings are involved and the award is based solely on sustained superior performance of assigned duties for a period of not less than six months, employees will be considered for a cash award in accordance with the following table:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Amount of Award</u>
GS-1 to 4 inclusive	\$100
GS-5 to 10 inclusive	200
GS-11 and up	300

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(IX G 1)

a Not more than one such award of this type may be granted in any eighteen-month period.

b Awards for superior work performance are not payable when a high rate of production results solely from innovations and improvements installed by management for the purpose of increasing production. Also, such general factors as long and faithful service, punctuality, cooperation, and performance of voluntary overtime are not proper bases for cash award consideration.

H Combined Monetary Savings and Intangible Benefits - Normally, awards will be based on either, but not both, types of benefits. Awards based on monetary savings will be limited to the amount determined by the monetary savings since it is felt that intangible benefits can be attributed to the majority of achievements. Awards based on intangible benefits should be determined in accordance with the intangible awards table. However, in exceptional cases where significant monetary savings occur, the intangible award may be increased to include the awards value based on monetary savings.

I Duplicate Awards - No two employees may be given cash awards for the same contribution except in a shared or group award. No employee may be given two cash awards for the same contribution except when actual first-year savings is greater than the estimate of savings on which the original award was based or when broader use is made of the contribution than was covered by the original award. In such cases, supplementary awards may be made subject to the limitations as to total amounts of awards.

J Award Claim Waiver - The acceptance of a cash award by an employee shall constitute an agreement that the use by the Government of the United States or the municipal government of the District of Columbia of any idea, method or device for which the award is made shall not form the basis of a further claim of any nature upon the Government of the United States or the municipal government of the District of Columbia by the employee, his heirs, or assigns.

K Partial Awards - In those instances where experimental work, trial tests or other delays will be necessary in order to determine the value of an adopted idea, an initial cash award not exceeding \$50 may be granted, depending on a conservative estimate of the anticipated value of the employee's contribution. No adjustment downward in this initial award should be made when the final determination of the value of the employee's contribution is ascertained. Further award consideration will be made on the basis of first-year benefits finally calculated.

L Supplemental Awards - Original awards do not always represent the full amount commensurate with subsequent savings which might be calculated or from savings resulting from wider application of the

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(IX L)

improvement. Supplemental awards may be paid to include additional amounts which may be warranted.

M Awards to Former Employees and Estates of Deceased Employees -
(Note: The policy on the payment of cash awards to former employees and the estates of deceased employees has not yet been established by the Department. The processing and payment of such cash awards should be held pending issuance of the necessary policy.)

N Payment of Awards

1 General - Incentive Awards to employees may be paid from any appropriations or funds available for administrative expenses. Funds must be obligated to pay an award which has been approved or recommended by an awards committee. Under no circumstances shall the approval of an award be construed as an authority to incur a deficiency or over-obligate an appropriation or allotment. Increases in allotments to be obligated for payment of awards must be justified to the Budget Division in the same manner as requests for any increase in allotment.

2 Obligations - When a Division or Office Committee approves an award of \$100 or less, an obligation should be established at that time. If a recommendation is made for an award which requires approval by the CSS Committee, an estimate should be made and the amount obligated. In the event the CSS Committee increases the recommended amount of the award, it shall advise the initiating Division or Office in order that the obligation may be increased by the proper amount and request a reply stating that funds are available and an obligation of the proper amount has been established. Upon receipt of this reply, the CSS Committee will then process Form CSS-70, "Approval and Certification of Cash Award."

3 Processing Paymentsa By Division and Office Committees

(1) A Division or Office Committee approving a cash award of \$100 or less shall prepare five copies of Form CSS-70, "Approval and Certification of Cash Award." The Chairman of the Committee shall sign the form to authorize payment of the award approved by the Committee. The original will be forwarded to the appropriate payroll office as authorization for payment of the award. A copy shall be retained for the Committee's files, a copy shall be forwarded to the appropriate personnel office for filing in the employee's official personnel folder and two copies shall be submitted to the CSS Incentive Awards Committee.

(2) If the award recommended is in excess of \$100, or is for a contribution other than a suggestion, one copy of Form CSS-70, "Approval and Certification of Cash Award," and the complete file on the case will be forwarded to the CSS Incentive Awards Committee.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(IX N 3 a)

(3) Division and Office Committees approving an award of \$100 or less may issue a Certificate which has been authorized by the Department or other written recognition of the award.

b By CSS Committee

(1) When a cash award is approved by the CSS Committee, the Executive Secretary will prepare the necessary copies of Form CSS-70 and shall sign the form authorizing payment of the award. The original and two copies will be submitted to the Division or Office Committee which will then arrange for payment by submitting the original to the appropriate payroll office. The Division or Office Committee will retain a copy for its files and send a copy of the Form to the appropriate personnel office for filing in the employee's official personnel folder.

(2) If the recommended award is in excess of \$300, the CSS Committee will submit the Forms to the Deputy Administrator, Operations, for referral to the Department. Approved Forms for awards in excess of \$300 will be distributed as in step "(1)" above.

(3) The CSS Committee will prepare Certificates for signature of the Administrator for all awards approved by the Committee and will arrange for suitable higher recognition for all awards approved at higher levels.

X EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS

A General

1 Definition - A suggestion is a constructive idea presented to management for the purpose of improving a specific situation. A suggestion may result in improvement or economy of operations, increased efficiency, conservation of property, improved working conditions, increased morale, better service to the public or be otherwise of benefit to the Government. A suggestion proposes a solution to the problem it presents. A proposal which merely calls attention to a problem but offers no solution is not considered a suggestion. Likewise, proposals which call attention to routine operations or maintenance procedures which would ordinarily be taken care of, such as repairing linoleum, repainting walls, and ordering supplies, are not considered suggestions unless changes are proposed in methods, procedures or equipment.

2 Originality - A suggestion has made a contribution if it results in an improvement. It is immaterial that an idea is not new or original, that it is being used elsewhere or that the technique is widely known. The important point is that the idea or technique was not used until suggested by the employee. Therefore, if the improvement results from the

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(X A 2)

submission of the employee's suggestion and not from wide knowledge of the principle or because of its use elsewhere, a contribution has been made.

3 Limitation Periods

a Time Limit for submission - Suggestions are usually submitted for management appraisal prior to their adoption. However, in those cases where a suggestion was made orally, the suggester is eligible for award consideration provided his suggestion is submitted in writing within six months of the date of adoption.

b Award Claim Period - A two-year period immediately following the date of a committee decision on a suggestion is designated as the "award claim period". If during this period the suggestion is adopted, or any supplementary beneficial action traceable to the suggestion is taken, the originator, any official, or an awards committee, may reopen the case for award consideration. In passing on such cases, the appropriate awards committee will be guided by the extent of direct or indirect influence of the suggestion on the action taken. An employee may extend the award claim period at any time by resubmitting his suggestion.

4 Adoption - A suggestion will be considered as adopted and eligible for award consideration when it is actually put into effect or a determination made by appropriate authority for its use at the earliest practicable date.

5 Modification of Suggestion - Many suggestions go through considerable change from the idea originally submitted to that which is finally adopted. It is appropriate to grant an award for a suggestion which, though not adopted in the form originally submitted, was directly instrumental in motivating management's action in effecting an improvement. If beneficial action has resulted from submission of the suggestion, the suggester has made a definite contribution even though his idea or solution was not accepted in whole or perhaps even in part.

6 Duplicate Suggestions - Duplicate suggestions are those which propose substantially similar solutions to the same situation at the same place or for the same area. Suggestions proposing similar solutions to the same problem in two different offices would not be duplicate suggestions. Suggestions proposing the same technique to two different problems, forms, etc., would not be duplicate suggestions. If adoption of a suggestion occurs within the 2-year claim period, the first suggester will normally be entitled to the credit for an award. However, in the event the second suggester has made a separate contribution or contributions toward the adoption of the original suggestion, an award to that suggester may be made in proportion to his contribution.

(X)

B Processing of Suggestions

1 Submission - Suggestions must be submitted in writing to be eligible for award consideration and may be submitted by the suggester or the suggester's supervisor. In cases where a suggestion is placed into effect before it is submitted in writing, an award may be considered provided an explanation of the circumstances and a description of the benefits resulting are submitted to the Division or Office Committee in writing within six months from the date of installation of the suggestion. No special form is required for submission of a suggestion. However, Form AD-287, "Employee Suggestion" is available for convenience. Employees will realize that well-thought out ideas that are clearly presented will aid in the consideration of their proposals and should include (1) description of the present or former method, (2) description of the new or proposed method, and (3) what the suggestion is expected to accomplish. Each different idea should be presented as a separate suggestion.

. 2 Action on Suggestions

a Supervisors - Supervisors receiving suggestions shall date them on receipt. Supervisors cannot reject a suggestion, but they can recommend rejection, indicating their reasons, then forward it through channels to the Division or Office Committee. All supervisory and administrative personnel reviewing a suggestion should indicate their comments, recommendations, etc. If the suggestion is adopted by one of the reviewers, it should be so indicated with an appraisal of estimated savings in manpower, money, materials and/or other benefits. Suggestions must be handled promptly and under no circumstances should they be unduly delayed or held in an inactive status. Supervisors shall make every effort to complete action on suggestions so that it can be submitted to the Division or Office Committee within 15 days.

b Division and Office Committees

(1) Within 15 days after a suggestion is submitted, the Committee should acknowledge the suggestion and inform the suggester, through the supervisor, of the action that has been or will be taken.

(2) Division and Office Committees do not have authority to reject all suggestions. They may not reject any suggestion which the Division or Office could not otherwise have placed into effect on its own responsibility. All suggestions which are beyond the authority of the Division or Office to put into effect must be sent to the CSS Committee.

(3) The Division or Office Committee shall notify the employee of the action which has been or will be taken. If the suggestion is rejected, reasons for the rejection must be given.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(X B 2 b)

(4) If a suggestion is adopted, a cash award may be approved and granted, or if beyond the delegated authority, recommended to the CSS Committee.

c CSS Committee

(1) The CSS Committee has authority to reject any suggestion or to recommend to the Deputy Administrator, Operations, for further consideration in the agency or referral to the Department, suggestions which in its opinion merit such consideration.

(2) The CSS Committee will serve as a clearing house for suggestions adopted at the Division or Office level which may have wider application throughout the agency, the Department or the Federal Government.

(3) If a suggestion is adopted, a cash award will be approved and granted, or if beyond the authority delegated to the Committee, will be recommended to the Deputy Administrator, Operations, for submission to the Department.

C Investigation of Suggestions - Suggestions will be referred for investigation by Division and Office Committees to appropriate persons within the Division or Office, and by the CSS Committee to the appropriate Division or Office or Deputy Administrator. Form CSS-620, "Referral and Appraisal of Employee Suggestion" will be used for this purpose. The investigation into the merits of a suggestion requires a review to determine whether the suggestion can and/or shall be placed into operation. Persons to whom suggestions are referred are responsible for investigating them as completely as possible. This includes determining the cause of the condition referred to by the suggester as well as determining the merits of the particular corrective action the suggester mentions. If a definite problem exists, the investigator shall give consideration to modification of the suggestion or other alternatives that might correct the situation or result in improvement, in addition to considering the suggestion as proposed. Consideration shall also be given to the widest possible application of improvements and such steps as may be warranted should be taken to obtain the fullest benefits. Such steps might include further referral of the improvement to offices where it may be beneficial, or to issue instructions requiring its use. Investigation of referred suggestions shall be carried out promptly, and should normally be completed within two weeks of referral date.

D Rejection Notices for Non-Adoptable Suggestions - When an employee suggestion is non-adoptable, the employee is entitled to know the reasons for the rejection. Each rejection provides an opportunity for management to enlarge the employee's knowledge of the agency's operations through the discussion of the specific employee suggestion, to thank the

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(X D)

employee for his interest and effort, and to encourage continued constructive thinking about improving operations. Rejections shall be in writing and presented by the employee's supervisor. The important objective in every rejection is to build and maintain employee confidence in the program and to keep all employees alert for better ways of doing the work.

XI PERFORMANCE CONTRIBUTIONS

A General - Award recommendations for performance type contributions may be made on the basis of:

1 Sustained superior work performance of assigned or related duties, or

2 Special acts and services in the public interest related to official employment when such acts and services are of sufficient merit to warrant special recognition.

B Submission of Award Recommendations - A recommendation for a performance type award will normally be initiated by the immediate supervisor. However, the recommendation may be submitted by any official or supervisor who is able to properly document the proposal. Employees do not initiate this type of award recommendation for themselves. It is the responsibility of management and supervision to see that employees are recommended for award consideration when their work performance, special acts or special services appear to warrant recognition. Opportunities for recommending performance type awards may occur when performance ratings are prepared, special projects are completed, when surveys, inspections and reviews are conducted, or by periodic review of employee and group performance by Awards Committees. In any instance, the recommendation should be initiated immediately after the accomplishment is discovered. The recommendation must be initiated within six months immediately following the date of completion of the period of performance or accomplishment of the special act or service.

C Outstanding Performance Ratings - It is not required that an employee receive an outstanding performance rating in order to qualify for a performance award. However, an employee who receives an outstanding rating will be granted a performance award if he is otherwise eligible, in accordance with Paragraph XV.

D Limitations - A minimum time limit of six months is prescribed for sustained superior work performance. While no minimum time limit is prescribed for special acts or services, awards committees may find it difficult to determine that an award is justified in those instances where the period of performance is less than six months. Not more than one performance award based on sustained superior performance will be submitted for the same employee during any eighteen-month period.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(XI)

E Documentation - All types of performance award recommendations shall include the following:

- 1 Name of employee.
- 2 Division or Office.
- 3 Official headquarters.
- 4 Position title, grade, and salary of the employee as of the date of completion of the contribution on which the award recommendation is based. If, at the time the recommendation is submitted, the position title, grade, and salary of the employee is different or a change is contemplated, this fact should be indicated.
- 5 The period of performance, by dates, on which the recommendation is based.
- 6 Summary of the contribution in not more than 40 words.
- 7 A full explanation of the contribution.
 - a Sustained Superior Work Performance - The explanation of the employee contribution when based on sustained superior work performance must clearly state the elements of the employee's position pertinent to the recommendation, and describe, with examples, instances, statistics, etc., how the performance in connection with the pertinent elements is such that a performance award is justified.
 - b Special Acts or Services - The explanation for special acts or services should clearly describe the special act or service and state why it is considered of sufficient merit to justify a performance award.
- 8 Data concerning benefits as a result of the employee's contribution.
- 9 List of cash awards, if any, granted the employee during the period of performance on which the recommendation is based.
- 10 Statement of employee's duties.

F Evaluation of Performance - Those who initiate awards, supervisors and officials who receive award proposals for review and comment, and awards committee members at all levels should be guided by the following in making their decisions concerning performance award recommendations:

(XI F)

1 The employee's position description, assigned duties, and the normal performance requirements of his position. The important factor is the degree to which the employee's contribution exceeds the normal requirements of the work for which he is being paid. Performance which is merely above average does not meet the requirements for an incentive award.

2 The amount of savings, if any, or the degree of improvement effected by the employee should be determined and considered in relation to the employee's job responsibilities. The amount of savings alone will not be used to determine the employee's eligibility for an award, since in many positions the accomplishment of large savings often results from normal performance of duties. Normally, to be entitled to an award, higher level employees will be expected to effect more significant improvements and/or larger savings than employees in the lower grades.

3 The extent to which an employee's contribution has a beneficial effect outside his immediate office is not in itself a qualifying factor but is one to be considered along with the degree to which the contribution exceeded the normal requirements of the work for which the employee is being paid and the amount of ingenuity or initiative reflected in the employee's contribution.

4 An accomplishment must be sufficiently outstanding to warrant special recognition in order to merit a performance award. A contribution which is merely above average does not merit this type of recognition. A performance type contribution which does not merit an award of at least \$50, should not be considered for a cash award for performance.

5 It is especially important that a performance type award should serve as an incentive to others to improve their effectiveness and worth as government employees. It should not be granted unless it would be recognized by fellow employees and associates as deserved recognition.

6 In determining entitlement to a performance award based on sustained superior performance, no credit can be given to any period of performance of the employee in a grade below his assignment at the time the award is paid, unless it can be determined to the satisfaction of the appropriate awards committee that the promotion to the higher grade was not the result of the employee's sustained superior performance at the lower level. In those instances where the sustained superior performance was the determining factor in causing the promotion, the promotion is considered adequate recognition for the superior performance in the lower grade.

7 When no measurable monetary benefits result from a performance contribution, consideration should be given to such intangible benefits as enabling the work of a unit to proceed on schedule during unplanned absence of associates or superiors; meeting unusual demands through

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(XI F 7)

performance of higher level duties on the employee's own initiative along with regularly assigned duties; performing regularly a sufficient quantity and quality of work over and above that provided by good employees to make a substantial difference in the number of persons that must be employed or assigned to the work of the unit; increasing noticeably, by either supervisors or non-supervisors the output of a unit through improvement of procedures, systems or methods; sustaining, by either supervisors or non-supervisors, the output of a unit through maintenance of morale in unusually adverse circumstances; improving service to the public in a specific or measurable way; enabling the unit to meet unanticipated unit demands by performance of unusual duties for short periods at the same or higher levels than regular duties; improving public relations or sustaining good outside relations of the agency, the Department or the government to an unusual extent or under unusually adverse circumstances; demonstrating unusual courage or competence in an emergency, such as rescuing fellow workers or saving public property.

8 Supervisors and evaluating officials should provide positive evaluations and comments concerning the contributions described in the recommendation stating specifically why approval or disapproval is recommended. Routine endorsements of "approval" or "disapproval" are of little value to awards committees in determining appropriate action on an award recommendation.

G Consideration for Honorary Awards - When prescribed requirements have been met, performance type contributions may be considered for any of the Department Honorary Awards covered in Paragraph XII of this instruction. Such Honorary Awards may be recommended in addition to, or in conjunction with, any cash awards granted.

XII DEPARTMENT HONORARY AWARDS

A Types of Department Honorary Awards - It is the policy of the Department of Agriculture to recognize notably outstanding or unusually valuable contributions by bestowing the following types of Honorary Awards:

1 Distinguished Service Award - Employees whose achievements qualify for the Distinguished Service Award (individual citation) will be presented with a gold medal, a certificate, and a gold lapel emblem. The Distinguished Service Award (Unit Citation) will consist of a gold medal and a plaque identifying the unit and briefly describing the achievement.

2 Superior Service Award - Employees whose achievements qualify for the Superior Service Award (individual citation) will be presented with a silver medal, a certificate, and a silver lapel emblem. The Superior Service Award (unit citation) will consist of a silver medal and a plaque identifying the unit and briefly describing the achievement.

(XII A)

3 Length-of-Service Award - Ten or more years' service with the Department is deemed worthy of recognition by award of an appropriate length-of-service emblem. The Length-of-Service Award will consist of a miniature shield and a certificate. The emblem will have an enamel panel of green for 10 years of service, white for 20, red for 30, blue for 40, and gold for 50.

B Eligibility Standards

1 General Qualifications - Any person shall be eligible for an award for services rendered while employed by the Department. An "employee" is defined as a person holding some type of appointment from the Department of Agriculture. Participants in a service for which a Distinguished or Superior Service Award is made that are not employees of the Department will not be eligible for any award, but their contribution will be appropriately cited at the ceremony of presentation to the associated employee, employees, or unit with which they cooperated.

2 Distinguished Service Award - Any employee will be eligible for consideration for the Distinguished Service Award whose achievement constitutes a notably outstanding contribution to agriculture and to the public service. It is not possible to foresee all types of outstanding accomplishment through which an individual may distinguish himself in the various fields served by the Department of Agriculture, but the following illustrative examples will serve as a general guide:

- a Outstanding service to agriculture and rural life;
- b Major contribution to science;
- c Outstanding skill in public administration;
- d Distinguished authorship;
- e Notably creative service;
- f Heroic action.

Two or more employees may each receive awards for a distinguished achievement in which they share. The Distinguished Service Award (unit citation) will be presented when a team, project group, or organization unit accomplishes a distinguished achievement and it is not feasible to individually identify the participants or their respective contributions. Achievements considered but passed over by the Department's Distinguished Service Awards Committee will be considered for the Superior Service Award.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(XII B)

3 Superior Service Award - Any employee will be eligible for consideration for the Superior Service Award as a result of service of unusual value beyond that ordinarily required. The Superior Service Award will be presented for meritorious performance, such as illustrated below:

- a Meritorious service to agriculture and rural life;
- b Valuable contribution to science;
- c Effective public administration;
- d Meritorious authorship;
- e Unusual courage or competence in an emergency;
- f Meritorious service of a creative nature;
- g Meritorious execution of duties, establishing an exemplary record;
- h Initiation of a suggestion that has resulted in important savings in money, time, materials, personnel, or equipment;
- i Initiative in devising work methods that result in important savings in money, time, materials, personnel, or equipment;
- j Achievement in improving the morale of employees with consequent improvement in work performance.

Two or more employees may each receive awards for meritorious achievement in which they share. A superior service award (unit citation) will be presented when a team, project group, or organization unit accomplishes a meritorious achievement and it is not feasible to individually identify the participants or their respective contributions. Employees retiring from the service will not be awarded Superior Service Awards on the basis of long service. Determination of the eligibility of such employees for awards should be made at the time when performance justifies that action and ordinarily should not be postponed until retirement.

4 Length-of-Service Award

a General - Each employee who has completed 10 years of service or more in the Department may be recognized by a Length-of-Service Award after completion of his tenth year and at 10-year intervals thereafter. Service will be computed on a net basis. Rolls of persons employed on a full-time basis will be prepared from existing

(XII B 4 a)

service records. A person employed on an intermittent basis for a net total of 10 or more years may apply for a Length-of-Service Award; however, shall in each case submit a statement of his service with the Department. Service in agency prior to its incorporation in the Department will be considered eligible service. Time on military furlough from an agency of the Department will be considered as service with the Department.

b Employees Who Leave the Department - When an employee who has more than 10 years of service in the Department leaves under honorable conditions, he will, upon request to the personnel office, be given a Length-of-Service certificate showing the exact number of years he has served. Former employees who served 10 years or more in the Department and who left under honorable conditions will upon request to the personnel office, also be given a Length-of-Service certificate showing the exact number of years served in the Department.

C Nominations for Award

1 General - Any employee may initiate a nomination for Distinguished or Superior Service Award, but all supervisory and executive personnel are directed to make a continuous review of the work of their employees and the organizational units under their direction and to initiate nominations for such individuals or groups which merit consideration. Any nomination which fails to receive favorable consideration for one year's award may be reviewed and resubmitted by the proper supervisory officials. Nominations are not made for Length-of-Service awards since personnel offices will determine from their records, the full-time employees who are to receive such awards.

2 Consideration for Nomination - Any employee, group of employees or unit whose work has been outstanding in some special way should be nominated for a Department Honorary Award. Long and faithful service, or retirement are not justification for this recognition. Performance which is above requirements in all aspects of the job may merit an outstanding performance rating, but alone will not justify Department Honorary Award. There must be a definite accomplishment which is considered to be unusual, outstanding, or extraordinary. The accomplishment must have special significance and it must be specific. In general, the achievement or service must constitute a meritorious contribution to agriculture, to the public service, or to the operations of the Department. Also, the significance of the contribution should be related to the grade of the person involved. An accomplishment by an employee in grade GS-12 might be considered routine, yet for a GS-7 it could be considered a superior achievement deserving of Department Honorary Award recognition.

3 Submission of Nominations - Nominations should be submitted through regular channels to the Division or Office Committee. Nominations to

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(XII C 3)

be considered for presentation ceremonies each May must reach the CSS Committee not later than October 31 of the previous year. Although this deadline date is specified, it is urged that the initiation and submission of nominations be carried on throughout the year. If because of late submission, a nomination fails to be considered in time for a specific presentation ceremony, it will be considered for the next succeeding ceremony and need not be resubmitted. While Division and Office Committees should keep the initial presentation by nominators as simple and informal as possible, final nominations recommended to the CSS Committee shall be submitted in an original and 5 copies and should include:

a Recommendation - Indicate whether recommendation is for Distinguished or Superior Service Award. Recommendations for Honor Award will also be considered for cash awards under Paragraph IX of this **Handbook**.

b Identification data

(1) Name of employee (or employees) or if it is a unit nomination give the name of the organizational unit, group, or project.

(2) Division or Office.

(3) Official Headquarters.

(4) Position title, grade, and salary of nominee as of the date of completion of the accomplishment on which the award recommendation is based. If, at the time the recommendation is submitted, the position title, grade, and salary of the employee is different or a change is contemplated, this fact should be indicated.

(5) The period of performance, by dates, on which the recommendation is based.

(6) List cash awards, if any, granted the employee during the period of performance on which the recommendation is based.

c Summary Statement - A short, concise statement which summarizes the accomplishment in 40 words or less. The summary statement should be to the point describing specifically what has been accomplished and its significance, value and/or results. This summary can be very instrumental in impressing reviewers and committee members. Hit the high points sharply and avoid adjectives and generalities.

d Detailed Description of the Achievement - A good medium write-up is better than a long documented case. Do not use a lot

(XII C 3 c)

of words that merely add to the length of the presentation. Do not use flowery words. Avoid adjectives and generalities. If a contribution is significant and exceptional, it can be explained in a direct manner and not too many words. Where possible, use headings for each section or paragraph to emphasize the significant point covered. Don't express opinions. Give facts fully supported. Do not use exhibits, attachments, or testimonial letters unless they are absolutely necessary to the nomination. They can be avoided in many cases by including some short text about them in the written presentation. Include data concerning benefits as a result of the employee's achievement.

e Attach statement of employee's duties if the nomination is for an individual.

D CSS Committee Authority - The CSS Committee has no authority to approve Department Honorary Award nominations, but can recommend to the Deputy Administrator, Operations, for referral to the Department Committee, those cases which in its opinion warrant higher action. Nominations for Honorary Award recommended by the CSS Committee will be considered for cash awards under its authority to grant or recommend cash awards for contributions.

E Departmental Action

1 Distinguished Service Awards Committee - A Committee of Distinguished Service Awards is appointed annually by the Secretary. It consists of three distinguished private citizens and three employees of the Department. Of the latter group, one is the Director of Personnel, who serves as Recorder. The Committee recommends to the Secretary those persons and units that should receive Distinguished Service Awards.

2 Superior Service Awards Committee - A Committee of Superior Service Awards is appointed by the Secretary. It consists of seven employees of the Department of Agriculture. One is the Director of Personnel, who serves as Recorder. The Committee recommends to the Secretary those persons and units that should receive Superior Service Awards.

3 Length-of-Service Determination - The Director of Personnel determines the eligibility of persons recommended for Length-of-Service Awards.

4 Review by Director of Personnel - Distinguished and Superior Service Awards will be reviewed by the Director of Personnel for possible nomination for Presidential Awards.

5 Presentation - Presentation of awards will be made with appropriate ceremony on or about May 15 each year (the date when Agriculture was established as an independent bureau in 1862) and at such other times as the Secretary may designate. Distinguished Service Awards will be presented by the Secretary. Superior Service and Length-of-Service Awards will be presented by the Secretary, by the Administrator or other officials of the agency.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

XIII INTER-DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS

A General Information - Inter-departmental awards are administered by the Civil Service Commission and are granted for suggestions or other contributions adopted by departments other than, or in addition to, the employing agency. Such awards may result from suggestions specifically related to the work of another department or on the review of suggestions relating to the work of the Department of Agriculture.

B Suggestions originating in Department of Agriculture

1 Employee suggestions which relate to the work of another department or those which on review appear to have application to other departments will be forwarded to the Department Committee by the CSS Committee for possible referral to the Civil Service Commission. Division and Office Committees submitting suggestions to the CSS Committee should indicate, when appropriate, specific information as to the activities in other departments where it is believed the employee suggestion can be used.

2 Upon receipt from the Civil Service Commission of notification of non-adoption or an award action, the Department Committee will inform the CSS Committee of the non-adoption or the award action. The CSS Committee in turn will inform the appropriate Division or Office Committee of the action taken. The Department Committee will be responsible for follow-up with the Civil Service Commission for necessary actions by other departments and for the arrangements for payment of an award to the Department of Agriculture employee.

C Suggestions originating outside the Department of Agriculture

1 Suggestions made by employees of other departments and forwarded by the Civil Service Commission for evaluation will be received by the Department Committee and submitted to the CSS Committee if applicable to this agency. Such suggestions will be referred by the CSS Committee to the appropriate Division or Office to be evaluated on the same basis and standards as used in the case of suggestions or other contributions submitted by employees of this agency.

2 A report of action taken on the suggestions of employees of other departments should be returned to the CSS Committee at the earliest practicable date, and in no event later than three months after referral. Requests for extension of time in submitting a report must be submitted to the CSS. The report will include:

a An estimate of the first year net monetary savings, if any;

b The intangible benefits, if any; and

(XIII C 2)

c The amount of award that would be in order for intangible benefits, if any, if the contribution had been made by an employee of this agency.

D Determination of Award - The Civil Service Commission, on the basis of the departmental report or reports, will determine the total inter-departmental first year net monetary savings and the total awards for intangible benefits resulting from the employee contribution, and recommend to each benefiting department (other than the employing department) its proportionate share of the award.

E Action on Civil Service Commission Recommendation - Within 30 days after date of receipt of the Commission's recommendation, the head of each benefiting department is required to notify the Commission, in writing, as to the action the Department will take on the Commission's recommendation.

F Payment of Inter-departmental Awards - In the case of inter-departmental awards arrangements will be made for each benefiting department to promptly remit to the employing department its share of the award not to exceed the amount recommended by the Civil Service Commission. The benefiting department shall charge its respective appropriations of funds. The employing department shall credit the sums received to a deposit fund account and as soon as practicable make payment of the award to the employee. The award should be presented with appropriate ceremony.

G Awards by Employing Department - A contribution by an employee of this agency, which has been adopted by this agency, shall be considered for an incentive award before referral to the Department, if it may be of benefit elsewhere. The incentive award shall be based on the benefit to this agency without regard to any additional benefit which may accrue elsewhere.

XIV PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS

A General - Presidential Awards are administered by the Civil Service Commission and are granted as a cash or honorary award by the President of the United States for contributions of unusually distinctive character or very widespread benefits. A Presidential Award may be in addition to the departmental awards authorized in this Handbook. The Presidential Award is the highest honor a civilian employee may receive.

B Nomination - Nominations shall be made by the personally signed recommendation of the Secretary to the Civil Service Commission for transmittal to the President whenever he believes such an award to be appropriate. The Director of Personnel will review Distinguished and Superior Service Awards for possible recommendation to the Secretary. In addition, the Civil Service Commission may recommend for Presidential Award employee contributions resulting in inter-departmental benefits.

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(XIV)

C Payment of Awards - The President is authorized to pay cash awards and incur necessary expenses for the honorary recognition of civilian officers and employees of the Government. In instances where the payment of Presidential Awards is to be borne by the departments other than or in addition to the employing department, the President determines the proportionate share to be borne by each department.

XV OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE RATINGS

A The standards for an Outstanding Rating will be necessarily high so that such ratings are not easily obtained.

B The duties of an employee recommended for an Outstanding Performance Rating shall be simply stated and listed in a minimum number of categories. The Executive Secretary of the CSS Committee shall be responsible for reviewing recommendations received to determine whether all required functions are covered in the duty list and shall discuss with the initiating Division or Office those cases not covering all duties before submission to the Committee.

C Each duty shall be fully documented by a description of performance during the rating period under consideration. The performance shall be specific in qualitative and quantitative terms and examples of such performance shall be given. Endorsements, opinions, conclusions and general statements must be supported by facts.

D It shall be the responsibility of the CSS Committee to consider separately for each duty listed, the performance described and determine if the performance description for each duty listed is in its judgment over and above the normal job expectancy.

E If the Committee determines that the description of performance for each duty listed is in its judgment over and above the normal job expectancy, approval of the Outstanding Rating will be in order with an automatic cash award as follows:

<u>Grade of Employee</u>	<u>Amount of Award</u>
GS-1 to 4 inclusive	\$100
GS-5 to 10 inclusive	200
GS-11 and up	300

F If the Committee determines that the description of performance for one or more of the duties listed is in its judgment not over and above the normal job expectancy, it shall take one of the following actions:

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(XV F)

1 If there appears no basis for an Outstanding Rating or other recognition -- Reject the recommendation.

2 If it appears that there is a possibility of justifying an Outstanding Performance Rating, but the documentation as presented is not sufficient to support such rating -- Return recommendation without action with the following advice to initiating division or office:

a Correct rating to "Satisfactory", or

b Resubmit with further documentation to support the Outstanding Rating, or

c Resubmit not as a recommendation for Outstanding Performance Rating but as an incentive award recommendation for special accomplishment based on one or more of items described. This resubmission may be the same presentation as the Outstanding Performance Rating recommendation, or it may be rewritten to emphasize the special accomplishment.

3 If there appears to be no basis for an Outstanding Performance Rating, but there is possibility for recognition for special accomplishment -- Reject Outstanding Performance Rating and return to the initiating division or office with the following advice:

a Close case, or

b Resubmit as an incentive award recommendation for special accomplishment based on one or more of the items described. This resubmission may be the same presentation as the Outstanding Performance Rating recommendation or it may be rewritten to emphasize the special accomplishment.

G In the event that a resubmission is made for incentive award, the award if any, approved by the Committee, shall be limited to an amount not in excess of the amount the employee would have received had the Outstanding Performance Rating been approved, and generally should be less than that amount, except that this limitation shall not apply in the case of a new presentation which might justify a higher award on the strength of the special accomplishment.

XVI RECORDS AND REPORTS

A Records - Division and Office Committees will maintain records to meet the following minimum requirements:

1 Contribution Case Folder - A folder for each contribution case handled should be established and should contain the suggestion or

INCENTIVE AWARDS HANDBOOK

(XVI A 1)

recommendation, comments, evaluation or investigation reports, correspondence, committee actions and disposition of case. The case folder should be filed, when closed, in numerical order according to case number, by fiscal year in which the case is closed.

2 Other Records - While specific requirements for records other than the "Contribution Case Folder" indicated above are not provided, Division and Office Committees shall maintain such records as may be necessary to adequately prepare the annual report of the Incentive Awards Program. Form AD-287-1, "Register of Employee Contributions Received" is available for use by Divisions and Offices having sufficient activity to justify use of a card record.

B Reports

1 Official Personnel Folder - Copies of all letters of recognition, commendation, and awards granted which represent final notification in a case, shall be forwarded to the personnel office for filing in the employee's official personnel folder. This information will receive management consideration when personnel actions concerning the employee are contemplated.

2 Annual Report of the Incentive Awards Program - The Civil Service Commission is required to make an annual report to Congress on the operation of the Federal Incentive Awards. CSS is required to submit its report to the Department by August 15 in order that the Department's consolidated report may reach the Commission by September 1. In order that the CSS report can be consolidated and submitted to the Department by the required date, all Division and Office Committees shall submit its fiscal year annual report on Form CSS-71, "Incentive Awards Program Annual Report" to the CSS Committee by not later than July 15. Report has been approved by the CSS Reports Control Staff and assigned number PM-22R.

XVII AWARDS FOR SUGGESTION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

When deemed appropriate, the CSS Incentive Awards Committee may establish and grant special merit awards to Divisions and Offices, employees, and supervisors for outstanding efforts, results and performance in connection with the Incentive Awards Program.



